

**Evergreen Fire District  
Board of Trustees  
Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Regular Board Meeting of July 13, 2020 – 6:00 pm**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**

Chairman Verworn calls meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

Verworn, Depaul, Fallon, Brockman, (Nace's term has expired)

Chairman Verworn states that Kyle Nace is absent and Fallon clarifies that Nace's term has expired and that the vacant seat has been filled by the County Commissioners who had been advertising to fill the seat. (quorum is present).

**RECOGNIZE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:**

Fire Chief Craig Williams, Fire Marshal Ben Covington

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

*At this time, public may comment on any public matter that is not on the Agenda of the Meeting and that is within the jurisdiction of the District.*

This Board meeting will be conducted through Google Meet.

To Join the meeting go to: [meet.google.com/dxx-shod-ihb](https://meet.google.com/dxx-shod-ihb)

Or join by phone: +1 347-448-2026 (PIN: 160457440)

Chairman Brodie Verworn is accepting public comments from now through the meeting on Monday, July 13th. Comments can be sent to:

[verwornb@msn.com](mailto:verwornb@msn.com)

*(no public in attendance)*

**FINANCIALS:**

**Discuss and Approve April and May 2020 Financials**

*Motion; Fallon to approve the checks and accept the financial statements for the months of April and May 2020; Brockman seconds motion; passes by quorum present.*

**PAST ITEMS/UPDATES:**

**1. Approve regular board meeting minutes of June 1st, 2020**

*Motion; Fallon to approve the minutes of the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting; Brockman second; passes by quorum present.*

**2. Approval of the Criteria for Fire Chief Annual Performance Evaluation**

Verworn emailed 2 sets of Evaluation Criteria out to Trustees with one set being evaluations by Officers and Fire Marshal and the second set is an evaluation by Trustees.

Officer's evaluation is a total of 13 questions that are fair and balanced. The Fire District Trustees Annual Evaluation of Fire Chief consists of 9 questions. DePaul states that he feels that question #7 had a 'micro managing' nature to it but clarifies he knows that was not the intent. His opinion is that any weekly updates or reports in general should be emailed to the Chairman who then forwards any information that needs to be shared with Trustees. Brockman states that

the question had originally been a part of another question and all he did was separate them out. He states his intent was not to create any increased frequency in communication between the Chief and Trustees. DePaul questions verbiage of Chief Williams to 'communicate with Trustee regular and consistently'. His opinion is that means 'all the time on everything'. Chairman Verworn says that he included the verbiage because he views 'consistent' as what is regularly reported by the Chief is quality and pertinent information. DePaul agrees with what the context of the verbiage. Fallon asks for clarification on the difference between questions #3 and #5. Question #3 talks about 'development and implementation' and question #5 states 'enforce'. He states that implementation and enforce are similar terms and feels that those questions are duplicating each other. Verworn states that Question #5 is more encompassing and question #3 could be stricken because it is redundant. Fallon states that the Board creates policies and Staff creates standard operating guidelines that the Board isn't always informed of so how are Trustees are supposed to understand the application of those to personnel. He feels Trustees could not provide appropriate input to that question because it's not the Board's scope of knowledge. Fallon states policies and MCA Codes are more appropriate to be in Question #3 and striking Question #5. Chief Williams suggests striking Question #3 and add 'Goals'. As Chief, he is goal oriented and usually demonstrates those goals to the Board and feels Trustees could readily and effectively evaluate him on being able to benchmark or achieve those goals per fiscal year. Chief Williams points out that while the questions are currently pertinent to him as Chief he will not be Chief forever and the document should be written to encompass whoever will be Chief after him. Brockman asks if Chief Williams provided the Board with his goals during last year's evaluation and Chief Williams states that he did and it included getting both contractual inter-facility agreements in place. Trustees agree Question #3 will read '*Chief Williams met his established goals and benchmarks set forth by himself and the Board since his last review period.*' Fallon's suggested revision in for Question #5 states '*Chief Williams follows District policies and makes recommendations as necessary consistent with all State and Federal laws.*' Fallon states the verbiage focuses on what the Board has direct responsibility for. Fallon questions the verbiage of 'highest standard' and 'professionalism' in question #4 because both are subjective. Both DePaul and Covington agree with the verbiage as written because interpretation of 'highest standard' and 'professionalism' is left up to individual Board members.

**Motion;** DePaul to approve the set of questions for the Annual Officer Evaluation of Fire Chief; Brockman second; passes by quorum present.

**Motion;** Brockman to approve as amended the Annual Trustee Evaluation of Fire Chief with the changes outlined in italics in the above discussion for Question #3 and Question #5; Fallon second; passes by quorum present.

### 3. Board by-law revision /MSU Local Government Services consultation

(Verworn states he has reached out again to them and has still not heard back so item will be tabled again).

### 4. Progress of EFR's SOP/SOG Projected Time Completed

Chief Williams states Kim More (Crowley & Fleck) has shown more willingness to move forward and at a much quicker pace than the attorney initially chosen to assist with this project. The fee for Kim More is higher but Chief Williams reminds the Board that all attorney fees for her representation during the Pritchard lawsuit were covered by insurance and is recommending the SOP revisions be handed over to her. She is already familiar with and has a copy of the handbook due to working on the Pritchard lawsuit. Kim More is expecting to take only 2 to 3 hours to separate policy from procedure and make revisions so Chief Williams has asked her for a Letter of Engagement. Fallon asks for clarification on SOP and SOG. Chief Williams states an SOG (standard operating guideline) provides 2 or more options to complete a task. vs. SOP (standard operating procedure). He states from a Board perspective it would be rare for them to address guidelines rather than policy. Fallon rephrases and states 'procedures follow policies and



guidelines follow industry standards'. Chief Williams states that our current handbook has a 50/50 mix of policy and procedure (along with some guidelines) that has to be separated out. Quorum agrees to move forward with Kim More.

#### **NEW ITEMS:**

##### **1. Evergreen Credit Card Processing Discussion**

Pintler has recognized that the County will not process credit cards which is a high percentage of revenue Pintler collects for the District because of the simplicity and ease of making credit card payments online. Flathead County is currently the only county in the State of Montana that does not allow that process. They allow something similar but it doesn't work for Pintler. He asks if there is any interest in challenging the County on this issue. He acknowledges there will still be an audit finding due to 9428 not being in the control of the County and states there will be an increase in workload created for the accountant, Ashley as well as admin. Cheri. The increased workload created for Pintler will increase the monthly bill and Chief Williams has asked them for documentation for additional labor costs. Fallon asks why Pintler's cost would increase. *(Discussion is tabled)*

##### **2. COLA Discussion**

Chief Williams states COLA is 3% compared to the 2.3% last year. This creates a problem because the District cannot sustain giving large increases so either the COLA or performance raise will need to be reduced. Chief Williams states that they could also decide to not adopt the annual COLA raise and base raises strictly on performance or adopt only a percentage of the COLA if it exceeds 2%. Fallon states he understands COLA as an attempt to tie it to CPI (consumer price index) with the raise to be a performance allocation. He states they need to establish which index is to be used and suggests possibly using the CPI in lieu of COLA with a maximum of both CPI and performance raise. CPI is designed to have a relative fairness across all income groups since everyone is hit by inflation at a similar level. CPI can be different than the COLA adopted by the County. Fallon states he will find out what the County uses as their index for COLA. Chief Williams suggests a possibility of limiting an increase to a total of 3%. Fallon states a cap could pose an economic hardship for some if costs of necessities such as gas or electricity go up. A cap can be used in guidelines but can be revisited each year. Chief Williams states this is one of many items that need revision in the policy handbook. DePaul suggests getting rid of COLA and going with an affordable performance raise only which Chief Williams supports. Fallon states he would cap it at 4% total for the current budget under consideration. Verworn suggests the possibility of giving unexpected bonuses. Covington states that the budget would not have to be revised if increases remained within 4% and Trustees agree with Ben's statement.

#### **PROPOSALS:**

##### **1 Seal coat/Striping for Stations 81 & 82**

JC Seal Coat beat out Montana Seal Coat by \$700.00. Montana Seal Coat had offered a discount in exchange for being able to use the job in promotional material. Third bid was given by Crone Seal Coat.

*Motion; Fallon to accept JC Seal Coat bid for seal coating/crack sealing/striping stations 81 and 82; Second by DePaul; motion carries by quorum present.*

#### **RESOLUTIONS:**

##### **2020-01 Budget Approval for Fund 7204 General Fund Account FY2021**

Covington states he has made all changes previously discussed. Fallon states he found an error and presumes it to be with the formula used by the accountant in determining both Ben and Craig's salaries and overtime. If the budget for 7204 were approved their salaries would have to be frozen for the next 3 fiscal years (through 2023). Chief Williams states it was due to their titles and the percentage of work



that they do. Covington adds it happened when they wanted to get personnel changed over to a 28 day work period so they would not accrue overtime. It resulted in reclassification of employment for both he and Chief Williams because they are administration as well as actively responding to calls. He states the Board approved a 15% increase and he is unclear how it resulted in Fallon's analysis. Fallon states he does not disagree with the overtime that had been received for prior years plus the benefits that go with the overtime as well as entitlement to a 3% raise along with everyone else for that year. He believes there was miscommunication between the District and the accountant and resulted in a huge pay raise above and beyond what it was anticipated. Chairman Verworn, Trustee Fallon, Chief Williams and Fire Marshal Covington will request a preliminary meeting with Ashley for clarification on the formula and the error. *(discussion is tabled until after meeting with Ashley)*

**2020-02 Budget Approval for Fund 7207 Hydrant Account FY2021**

*Motion; Fallon to approve Resolution 2020-02 for Fund 7207 as presented; seconded by Brockman; carries by quorum present.*

**2020-03 Budget Approval for Fund 7250 Capital Outlay Account FY2021**

*Motion; Fallon to approve Resolution 2020-03 for Fund 7250 with reserve numbers edited to show \$136,374.00; seconded by Brockman; carries by quorum present.*

**2020-04 Budget Approval for Fund 7288 Repayment Account FY2021**

*Motion; Fallon to approve Resolution 2020-04 for Fund 7288 as read by Chairman Verworn; Seconded by Brockman; carries by quorum present.*

**2020-05 Budget Approval for Fund 9428 Ambulance Account FY2021**

*Motion; Fallon to approve the Resolution 2020-05 for Fund 9428; seconded by DePaul; carries by quorum present.*

**2020-06 Budget Approval for Fund 4212 Department Account FY2021**

*Motion; Fallon to approve Resolution 2020-06 for Fund 4212 as presented; seconded by Brockman; carries by quorum present.*

**2020-07 Budget Approval for Benevolent Fund FY2021**

*Motion; Fallon to approve Resolution 2020-07 for Benevolent Fund as presented; seconded by Brockman; carries by quorum present.*

**CHIEF'S REPORT:**

**1. May2020 Call Volume**

**A) Comparison Incident Count by Weekday/Hour (all zones) for May2020**

**B) Comparison Incident Count per zone for May2020**

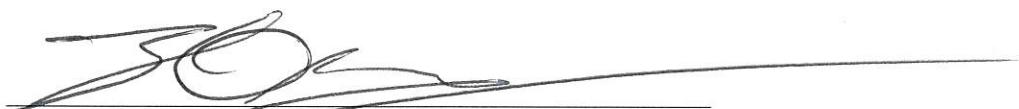
**C) Comparison Incident Statistics for May2020**

Chief Williams there were 278 calls vs. 235 in 2019 with EMS calls at 234 2020 and 199 last year and Fire calls are 44 vs. 36 last year. Year to date is 1278 calls vs. 1191 this same time last year with over 100 more EMS calls than last year. 168 vs. 121 calls this time last year. EMS and Fire calls have increased with a slight decrease in IFT's over this time last year and still believed to be due to Covid 19 with special ALS calls increasing daily. Chief Williams states that a special ALS call will add another hour to get an ambulance back into service and there are several positive Covid patients being transported repeatedly in Evergreen. The N95 masks cannot be reused and have to be disposed of. Suspect N95's can be put into the UV box for sanitation. The Department is searching for more N95's. Personnel were fitted to a specific N95 but states there are 10 different types of N95 and those are used up. Cost is \$10.00 per mask and we are no longer getting reimbursed for the inflated rate for PPE. Sanitation products are getting scarce again for sanitization of ambulances. 2 personnel are


still waiting for Covid test results but all other personnel who were exposed has tested negative. The Department has had a total of 14 personnel in quarantine without a positive. He states that Covid has transitioned from the elderly to younger people; especially those younger people who patron the bars. Chief Williams states Lincoln County has 19 positives and has caused the Department to revise protocol on inter-facilities to Libby. Chief Williams states the Department only gets about 25% of Covid supplies that are requested and some supplies are 'outdated' or not for medical use. Brockman asks if the Department has been denied on supplies and Chief Williams states that the District has been denied and on a waiting list for N95's from different sources including the CDC (national stock pile). CDC hasn't released 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of masks because they are waiting for wave 2 of Covid to happen. Brockman asks how the supply distribution is determined. Chief Williams states the County is receiving it and they disperse the supplies based on call volume and need but if the District's PPE runs out then we will have to rely on mutual aid. He states it's either that or wearing SCBA which would most likely frighten people. Chief Williams states that currently there are no state laws that force a private for-profit enterprise engaged in testing to cooperate or report on their testing. Chairman Verworn states mental health help is now available for responders, their spouses and/or children and will be announced in the newspaper.

**Adjourn 9:53 pm**

*The President of the Board of Trustees, as presiding officer of any meeting of the Board of Trustees, may close the meeting during the time the discussion relates to a matter of individual privacy; and, then, if, and only if, the presiding officer determines that the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure. The right of individual privacy may be waived by the individual about whom the discussion pertains; and, in that event, the meeting must be open.*



Chairman Brodie Verworn or Vice Chair Randy DePaul



Secretary Tony Brockman